

Greek & Roman Societies

Enduring Understanding

The type of society that one lives in often determines the form that its government takes. The Greeks and Romans developed voting systems that can help us explain and understand the development of the voting systems that we use today.

Essential Questions

How are voting procedures and individual rights determined by the type of government developed by a society?

Is voting a privilege, a right, and/or a responsibility?

Has the voting process in the United States evolved from the voting processes in earlier civilizations?

Students Shall Be Able To:

C.4.7.1 — Discuss the different ways executive, legislative, and judicial powers have been organized

C. 4.7.2 — Discuss different forms of executive leadership in civilizations (e.g., judge class, patrician class, priest class, warrior class, emperor, nobility)

Additional Social Studies Connections

H.6.7.6 — Explore the development of the Roman Empire and the people associated with it

H.6.7.7 — Examine contributions that past civilizations made to the modern world

H.6.7.17 — Discuss factors that led to the fall of the Roman Empire

H.6.7.30 — Compare and contrast life in Athens and Sparta (e.g., the role of citizens, social classes)

Materials Needed/Attachments

Attachment 1 — *Forms of Government*

Attachment 2 — *Comparing Citizenship & Voting*

Attachment 3 — *Greek/Roman Mystery*

Vocabulary

totalitarian
plebian

right
responsibility

patrician

privilege

Teaching Strategies

1. Divide the class into at least two groups (four if the class is large). One group will research citizenship and government in Athens and the other group will do the same for Sparta.

Research will focus on the following:

- *What were the qualifications for citizenship?*
- *What role did the citizen play in the selection of leaders?*
- *What qualifications did a person have to possess in order to hold public office?*
- *What was the structure of government? How was the judicial, executive, and legislative structure of power organized?*
- *What were the principal offices of leadership?*
- *Distinguish between privileges, rights, and responsibilities of citizens and/or non-citizens. Or define and identify privileges, rights and responsibilities.*
- *What was life like for citizens/ non-citizens? (Think about privileges, rights, and responsibilities. How is this different from life in the United States?)*
- *Describe the voting process.*

Attachment 1: Forms of Government contains an example of charts which could be used for this activity.

A Venn Diagram Attachment 2: Comparing Voting Laws, could also be used filling in differences between Athens, Sparta, and Rome with similarities in the overlapping areas.

2. When the research is completed, have the students compare the two societies using the information in the completed charts. Teacher may choose to review background knowledge on how each society developed using the textbook or other available resources.

- *Why did the two societies develop differently?*

Extension — Expand the research and chart to include Rome and the United States, using the Venn Diagram (Attachment 2, page 2).

3. Make a transparency of Attachment 3: Greek/Roman Mystery. At the start of the unit, show the class the transparency.
 - *Class members are encouraged to ask deductive questions to determine the use/ purpose of the featured objects.*
 - *The teacher can provide answers after reading the answer sheet.*
 - *If the students can guess the answer within a few minutes, the unit can begin.*
 - *If the students cannot guess the answer within a few minutes, the teacher has the option of: (1) telling the students the answer and beginning a general preliminary discussion of the topic; or (2) assigning a mini-research project for the students to find the answers for themselves.*

4. Attachment 3: Greek/Roman Mystery is an activity designed to be an introduction to voting in Greece and Rome and also to help students understand the development of the voting systems that we use today.

Using the activity above, present an argument for the statement below:

The voting system in Rome does or does not help us explain and understand the voting system in the United States. Support your statement with specific examples from your research.

Assessments/Rubrics

Teacher-created rubric.

Forms of Government

Use the chart below to list the differences in government in Athens and Sparta.

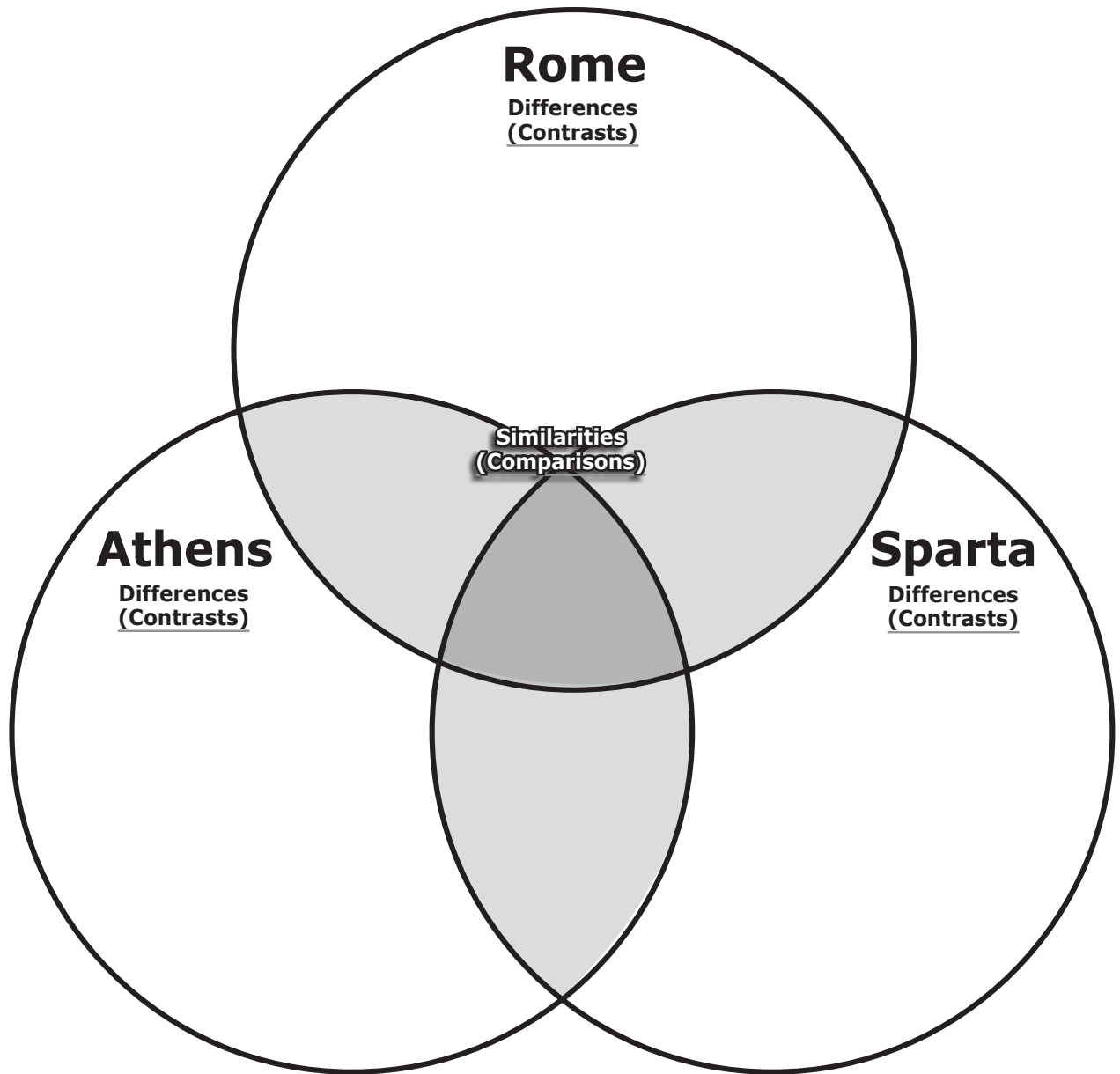
	Sparta	Athens
1. Qualifications of Citizenship		
2. Role of Citizen in Selecting Leaders		
3. Qualifications for Holding Public Office		
4. Principal Offices of Leadership		

Compare the effectiveness of citizen participation in Athens, Sparta, and the United States. List examples to show how voting is a right, a privilege, and a responsibility. Use the chart below to organize your thoughts.

	Sparta	Athens	U.S.
Right			
Privilege			
Responsibility			

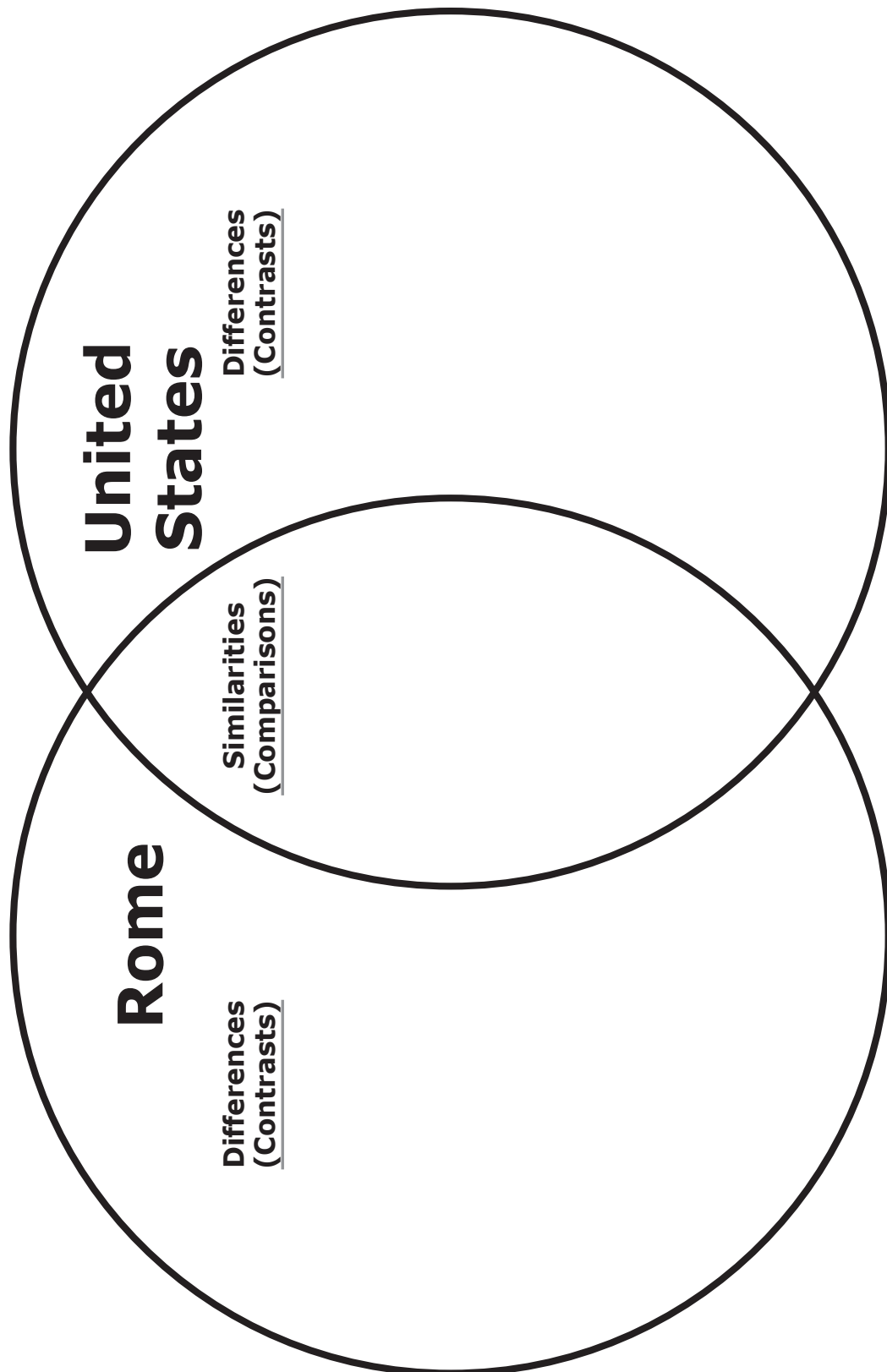
Comparing Citizenship & Voting

Using a Venn Diagram, compare either voting or citizenship in Athens, Sparta and Rome. Similarities between the nations should be placed in the overlapping areas.



Comparing Citizenship & Voting

Using a Venn Diagram, compare the voting laws in Rome to the modern United States voting laws. Similarities between the nations should be placed in the overlapping areas.





The Romans were noted for many achievements in the area of government and law. For instance, they initiated a form of representative government and a division of power among government branches.

Even though many modern political and judicial processes come from the Romans, the Athenians did originate one political process used in the United States today earlier than the Romans.

The objects at the top of this page were part of this early Athenian political process. *Name the process and describe its operation.*

Greek/Roman Mystery

Answer to the Greek/Roman Mystery

The political process in the mystery is the voting process.

Originally used in Athens, the Romans adapted the voting procedures represented by the two objects in the mystery.

The object at the left is a voting vase, which was used to hold the “ballots” after the Roman Assemblymen voted.

The object at the right is a Roman ballot. Made of heavy wax, the ballot contained the names of the two contenders for political office (note the names across the top of the ring).

After hearing the two contenders speak, each Assemblyman would mark out the name of the candidate he did not want, thus leaving the name of his choice across the top.

After the ballots were cast, the vase was emptied and the votes counted to determine the winner.



Candidates had to make their own speeches. Nothing precluded having another person write the speech for the candidate, but rules prohibited anyone other than the candidate from delivering the speech before the gathered Assemblymen.

Other Roman voting procedures included the use of two disks (one with a hollow center and one with a solid center). A hollow disk meant a negative “NO” vote, while the solid center meant a “YES” vote on the issues involving legislative matters.